



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Director of Health Services

At its meeting held June 14, 2005, the Board took the following action:

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Supervisor Knabe made the following statement:

“With the closure of King/Drew Medical Center’s Trauma Center and the uncertainties surrounding that facility, along with the closure of various other County health clinics, some community hospitals nearby King/Drew have seen dramatic increases in their emergency room visits, as well as increases in the number of uninsured patients.

“For example, Downey Regional Medical Center, located five miles from King/Drew, has experienced a 37% increase in utilization of its emergency room in the past three years, along with a doubling of the number of uninsured patients who came through its emergency room and became inpatients. Downey Regional is a non-disproportionate share hospital (non-DSH) and therefore received no funding for these patients, beyond what little the uninsured could pay. These additional costs have added over \$4 million in losses annually on top of the millions of dollars of losses Downey Regional has experienced in servicing indigent patients and Medi-Cal patients in increasing numbers over the past several years.

“The cumulative effect of these trends has been fiscally devastating to Downey Regional, and they are threatening the viability of emergency room services, which the community desperately needs and which the Hospital wants to provide, but cannot do so indefinitely under the current situation. Should the County lose Downey Regional’s emergency room services, over 7,000 ambulances would need to be diverted annually, and this, in turn, would threaten the viability of all remaining hospitals in the King/Drew area. This is a domino which we can not allow to fall. The chain reaction would be more than the system would withstand.

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“I believe that the Director of Health Services should work with hospitals that are being negatively impacted, especially non-DSHs surrounding King/Drew Medical Center’s service areas, and report back to the Board with a plan of action to prevent the closure of further vital services.”

Therefore, Supervisor Knabe made a motion that the Board instruct the Director of Health Services to report back within 30 days on the following recommendations to:

1. Maintain current levels of emergency room services; and
2. Identify the appropriate level of support needed for impacted, non-disproportionate share hospitals to maintain their viability and continue to serve patients, especially for hospitals in or adjacent to the Martin Luther King, Jr./Drew Medical Center service area, including any arrangements for the provision of funding or inpatient bed licensing by the County or other means.

Carol Meyer, Director of Emergency Medical Services, Department of Health Services, responded to questions posed by the Board.

After discussion, Supervisor Burke made a suggestion that Supervisor Knabe’s motion be amended to remove County funding and instead seek possible Federal or State funding.

The Chair ordered a division of the question.

Supervisor Burke’s amendment, seconded by Supervisor Yaroslavsky, was duly carried by the following vote: Ayes: Supervisors Burke, Yaroslavsky, Antonovich and Molina; Noes: Supervisor Knabe.

On motion of Supervisor Knabe, seconded by Supervisor Yaroslavsky, the Board adopted Supervisor Knabe’s motion as amended by Supervisor Burke to instruct the Director of Health Services to report back within 30 days on the following:

1. Recommendations to maintain current levels of emergency room services; and

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2. Identification of the appropriate level of support needed for impacted, non-disproportionate share hospitals to maintain their viability and continue to serve patients, especially for hospitals in or adjacent to the Martin Luther King, Jr./Drew Medical Center service area, including any arrangements for the provision of possible Federal or State funding or inpatient bed licensing or by ~~the County~~ or other means.

Said motion was duly carried by the following vote: Ayes: Supervisors Burke, Yaroslavsky, Knabe, Antonovich and Molina; Noes: None.

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Copies distributed:

Each Supervisor

Chief Administrative Officer

County Counsel